

DESIGN

Vol. XXXII, No. 9

FEBRUARY, 1931

DESIGN PROBLEMS OF THE TABLEWARE INDUSTRY

BY ARTHUR BAGGS AND MARION L. FOSDICK

First of a series of articles on tableware which we will publish from a report given before the American Ceramic Society and previously published in the Journal of American Ceramics

■ The industry has definitely started on its way to better things. Growth and progress will come whether art divisions or ceramic art schools are in the picture or not. But the schools sincerely want to play a part in this development. They should and they can if the manufacturers will help them to define clearly the needs of the field and lend cooperation in working out courses and lines of research which will develop useful men and material for the industry. Our ceramic art schools cannot as yet claim your support on the basis of past accomplishment in tableware design. But, here they are, potential tools for your use. Sharpen them up with your counsel and friendly help. Some day they hope and expect to return real service to you.

Need for Improved Design as a Merchandising Factor

Here is a point which seems to need no argument. We have yet to find a manufacturer who does not agree that the table ware industry, particularly the earthenware branch needs more effort spent on the attractiveness of its product. It is a commonplace of present-day observation that in all industrial lines the consumer is insisting that what he buys shall be not only of good technical quality but shall have novelty, taste, and distinction in its design.

Other industries seem to have been more alert to the general public attitude than have the potters. At least many of them have more vigorously gone about the business of analyzing public demands and meeting them with the best available artistic skill.

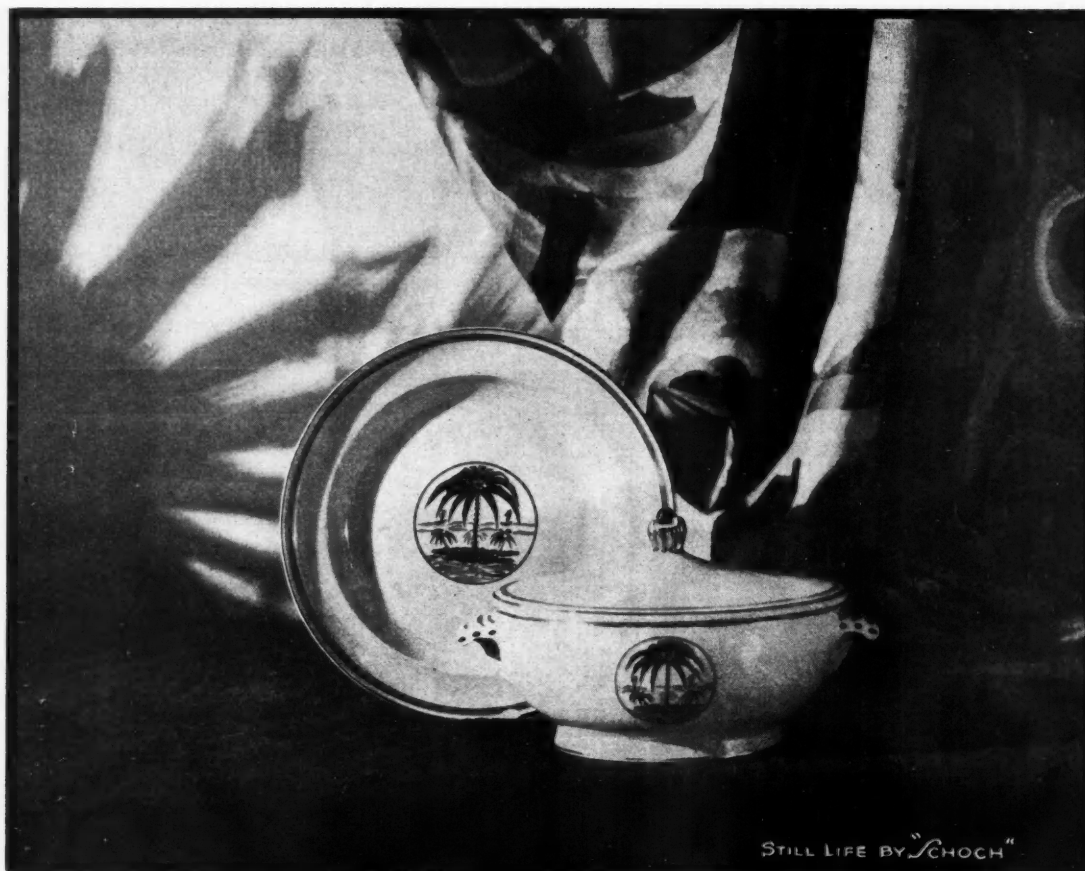
To cite an example: A firm of prominent silk manufacturers has for years maintained a design research staff both in Europe and in this country whose business it is to study style trends with great thoroughness. This staff goes so far as to publish a chart which attempts to forecast for a

year or more in advance the popular colors and types of pattern. The retail distributor is also furnished with charts to be used by the sales people in various departments. These charts offer tasteful suggestions for many accessories of costume which will harmonize with the current mode in silks. These examples are mentioned to show the intensive study which these people have been giving not only to style and design but to aiding the stores to sell their merchandise successfully. In both of these lines of effort the tableware industry as a whole falls far below the standard which other manufacturers are setting. The battle is not over when a line has been placed in a store. An excellent design may be lost unless it is properly shown and its good points are appreciated by those who sell it. One has only to go shopping in the average china department to be convinced that it would pay any tableware maker to carry on a definite educational campaign for building up among sales people a friendly enthusiasm for the merits and sales possibilities of his line.

Present Sources of Tableware Design

Until quite recently such a position as art director was almost unknown in American tableware factories. To be sure, Frank G. Holmes in the Lenox plant had been directing its design policy for years with the marked success which is known to all. Some of the leaders in hotel china employed trained artists in charge of design. But generally speaking, the artistic policy of the average factory was shaped by a sort of composite jury consisting of the owners of the plant and the salesmen. The idea of employing a man whose whole time and thought should be given to creative design was radical. An artist could always be secured if you needed one. Most plants employed at least one expert decorator, who could be depended upon to copy ornaments skillfully. Among their mold makers there usually was at least one skilled molder who could execute molds for new shapes or ornaments if he had a pattern to follow. Splendid craftsmen, these, but usually without training or special ability as creative designers. For the problem of producing a near copy of a popular shape or decoration they filled the bill.

The matter of new decalcomania explanatory phrase about decalcomania patterns was also simple. Every so often the decalcomania manufacturers brought out their new offerings. All that was necessary was to decide which



STILL LIFE BY "SCHOCH"

ones you liked best and which could be applied most easily to the current shapes. No need of an artist there. The owner knew what he liked and the salesman knew what would sell. An artist would just ball things up. Some truth in that attitude, too, as has been demonstrated sometimes when artists with no ceramic background have occasionally attempted to design ware for production.

This policy seemed to work as long as the public was buying dishes freely with utility and price the chief considerations. But the market has become a lot more "choosy" than it used to be about everything, dishes included. Realizing this, the more progressive manufacturer is beginning to employ a highly trained specialist whose job is to study style tendencies and create new shapes and decorative treatments to anticipate rather than simply to follow market demands. A few of the larger organizations now have art directors who are skilled not only in design but also in the technology of ceramic materials and processes. Other factories are employing special artists for problems such as a new shape or an embossed pattern. These consulting designers as a rule are unused to thinking in terms of ceramic limitations. Their work must be supervised and modified by the practical men in the plant to suit it to quantity production. Good work has been done by some of these artists who have no ceramic background.

Creative imagination and taste are, of course, the essential qualities in a designer. A man possessing these with no ceramic experience will accomplish more than the best ceramic technician who lacks them. It seems obvious that if more designers who have imagination, taste, and the requisite technical knowledge can be developed, they will be

While not extreme the groups on this and opposite page represent a move toward better shapes and decorations in popular priced ware

most useful to the industry. At the present time such men are few and generally are of English or European training.

An inquiry as to the origin of some recently produced shapes and patterns brought out the following examples which perhaps represent average sources of design employed by factories having no permanent art organization:

(1) A dinnerware shape (and a good one) designed by an artist whose profession was painting and decorative design, with no previous ceramic experience.

(2) Decalcomania and print patterns by the same artist.

(3) Decalcomania and print patterns by a designer not experienced in factory production.

(4) Two embossed patterns on dinnerware shapes by a professional sculptor and ornamental modeler with no factory experience.

(5) Embossed pattern on dinnerware by a plant superintendent playing with design in his spare moments.

(6) Embossed pattern on dinnerware by the head decorator of a plant, a man of excellent technical ability and considerable artistic training.

(7) A close adaptation of an old English shape by the head modeler of a plant.



Among the companies in America making dinnerware the Sebring Pottery is outstanding in its effort to produce a really fine type of design both in form and decorative effects

(8) A decal pattern inspired by a line drawing used as a decoration in a current magazine. Someone in the organization recognized its decorative possibilities, clipped it, and sent it to be translated into decal, which was done successfully.

Importance of the Decalcomania Manufacturer

Decalcomania patterns are for the most part designed by the staff artists of the decal manufacturers and on them the average earthenware plant still depends for most of its decorative patterns in overglaze or underglaze.

The decal manufacturers are therefore, the neck of the bottle, so to speak, in regard to applied transfer pattern in the average plant. Under present conditions, their design offerings from year to year largely determine the character of the current tableware decoration. If the industry is to progress artistically it seems important that manufacturers of decal should be particularly eager to keep abreast or ahead of the style trends.

Their job is a difficult one and while it is easy to criticize such a product, to greatly improve its general standards and at the same time to meet price competition, is a problem which would offer plenty of thought even to the most com-

petent critics. Nevertheless, if the industry is to go forward in the use of decalcomania patterns, the manufacturers of this material must make a greater effort than ever before to really lead as creators. They must risk more in pioneering outside the accepted types of ornament, study more intensively the trends of all decorative work, and spend more money for creative designers who can give real distinction to their product. The new notes contributed to tableware decoration come frequently, not from the staff designers of the decal plants but from the outside, whereupon they are eagerly seized and exploited in numerous adaptations which soon are scattered over the whole industry.

The service and reliability of commercial decal manufacturers is said to be good and doubtless they deserve more credit than is sometimes given them by those who find so many decal patterns mediocre and uninteresting.

The problem of making one's own decalcomania prints is difficult and expensive, possible only to a large factory with an output sufficient to keep the decal plant operating steadily. Certain hotel china firms produce their own decal successfully, but probably with no less expense than if they bought it. They have, however, a great advantage in being independent as to delays and in being able to keep close control and supervision of the patterns during development.

The matter of close imitation is one which needs thought not only in considering decal but in all ceramic design work. There should be adequate protection for designs, not only regarding literal copies but also obvious copies with minor differences which are scarcely perceptible. There are, of course, design patents, but how much do they protect?



FUJIYAMA

HOKUSAI
1760-1849

JAPANESE PRINTS ■ ■ COLORFUL ART OF THE ORIENT

BY BLANCHE NAYLOR

All prints reproduced with this article
are from the Shima Art Company

■ A graphic art which is comparable in method to our lithography, but of much greater antiquity, the making of Japanese prints is dependent upon the individual judgment and taste of the craftsmen, and their subtle gradations of color blendings for its best completion. The use of an infinite number of deftly shaped blocks of various sizes makes possible the nuances of tone which are found in the best work of the Japanese print makers.

In any study of the prints of Japan it is essential to first outline the basic feeling of their painting, since the related craft of color prints follows the older one to a great extent in results produced, although differing in process and in manner of obtaining final effects.

It is a very difficult matter to try to put into a few words the essential dissimilarity of Oriental and Occidental art. The whole spirit of the Eastern work is based upon a philosophy of life which differs so much from the somewhat more materialistic attitude of Western workers that it is a difficult task to explain its inherent meaning, and for that matter it is only a life time student of the Orient who would have courage to make definitions and translations into any language of the so involved complexities of suggested meaning which are to be found in even the simplest Japanese print.

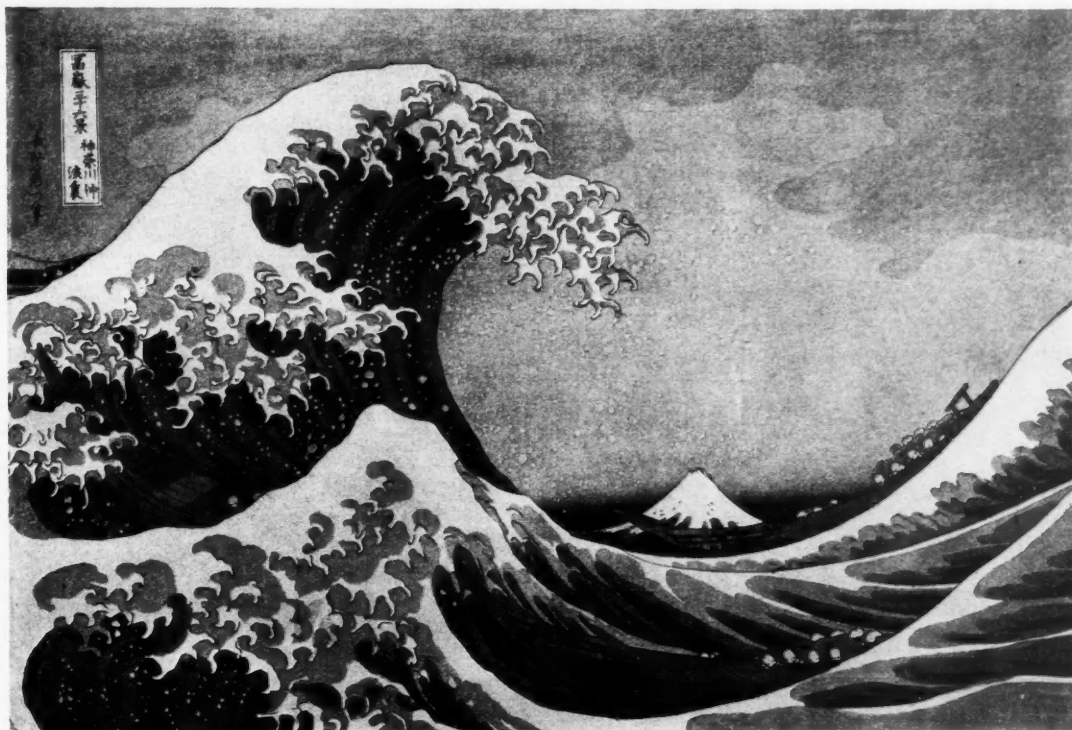
Perhaps the easiest manner of suggesting the mode of thinking upon which this art is based, is to say that the

Eastern mind is somewhat more attuned to the universe within and without the person, to the acceptance of nature's combined forces, and to the introspective, calm, thoughtful mode of life than is our hurrying West. This is a rather feeble attempt to interpret the great difference in subject forms, and in treatment, which is so conspicuous in a comparison of the two branches of art. Although we may strive for the same ultimate effect, our ways, our chosen roads, or those which differing circumstances of life have forced upon us, are widely separated. The deeper one goes into research in Japanese art forms, the more interesting and lucid they become. The prints range from the exotic, strangely compelling interpretations of usual forms, to the simpler, more conventional type, but in all there are shades of almost inexpressible meaning. Some of the larger subjects are somewhat allegorical and filled with involved and complex symbols, and in reproducing the paintings of their ancestors and of modern workers the craftsmen make reproductions in their prints which are always of sympathetic spirit, since every native is trained from early youth to appreciate and understand the art of his ancient country, and even the poorest are capable of giving graphic expression to their thoughts and emotions, or to translating those of others.

The art of Japanese print making is carried on by means of innumerable blocks upon which are cut different portions of the picture to be reproduced, corresponding to the predominant colors used therein. For the subordinate colors separate blocks may be made also, or combinations of two shades may be carefully superimposed upon one another until the desired finish is obtained. This manner of hand

THE WAVE

HOKUSAI
1760-1849



printing is the most delicate and effective way of obtaining fine distinctions of color tone, equal in its own way to the painting of great artists.

The final effect is to be judged as a work of art in itself, and also as a means of communicating emotions and ideas to the beholder. On both counts they are beautifully done, and as a means for translating the beauties of former days and of the present to large numbers of people the Japanese print is unequalled. Authorities on the subject invariably wax enthusiastic about their tremendous possibilities for interpreting and spreading among appreciative art lovers the treasures of past ages copied exactly and accurately in form and in color, and yet they are equally adapted to the more naturalistic, less conventional styles of recent years. To find and comprehend a fine print is like meeting two foreigners of different nations who cannot speak each other's language, but whom you may understand perfectly.

Although the Japanese print is in spirit similar to our lithograph, the Oriental work antedates ours by some years, and since the entire work is produced by hand there is a definite atmosphere about it which cannot always be obtained by purely mechanical means, a feeling which is difficult to reproduce in any other medium. The conditions and limitations of material and mode which apply to the Oriental paintings of antique and modern derivation naturally have had an effect indirectly upon the making of fine prints. In paints, the natural result of the methods used was to bring about a certain restraint, a simplicity, a definite directness and sincerity. The fact that almost all Japanese prints in the past have been made either upon silk or heavy fibrous paper has had a distinct result in the fashion of painting and the style necessarily used, which resulted in conciseness and clarity, decision of touch, since a single wrong line or stroke could not be changed. This was due to the surfaces used, that of silk and the particular paper being tremendously absorbent. Once a shape or outline was placed upon these backgrounds it must remain,

One of the many unique views of Fujiyama by Hokusai showing the famous volcano in the background, an extraordinary study in simplicity

and the sure technique of the famous Japanese artists was thus developed. The cultivation of absolute accuracy in color sense and in detail of form is naturally essential to the perfect copying of such work in prints. The fine grained silk makes an excellent background, as does the Japanese paper, but both are very difficult to work upon.

The theory upon which the creation of both Japanese paintings and prints are based is approximately this: Art in any form is a language by which to express certain feelings, reactions and beliefs. It is needless, therefore, the Japanese artists feel, to report in strikingly detailed manner just what various things look like. To suggest the inmost essence the general abstract form is oftentimes used. The observer will understand this if he is the sort of person who will like their art, if not, he will not be an admirer of the print. This abstract beauty, which is to be seen everywhere in the universe, is the eternal inspiration of these Oriental artists, whether of the old or the new school. The mysterious yet indefinable forces which rule this universe, they feel, can best be expressed in large and spacious landscapes, rising sometimes to sheer heights, or spread out over vast plateaux. In such scenes a representative collection of the creatures of this world may be placed in their proper habitat, and as an authority on the Japanese print has said, "These painters and makers of prints set themselves to express the massed grandeur of mountains, the rush of streaming torrents, the swift, joyous flight of birds, the growth of plants, the grace and strength, the fleetness of horses, and by means of picturing these and other wonders

TWO LOVERS

UTAMARO
1754-1806

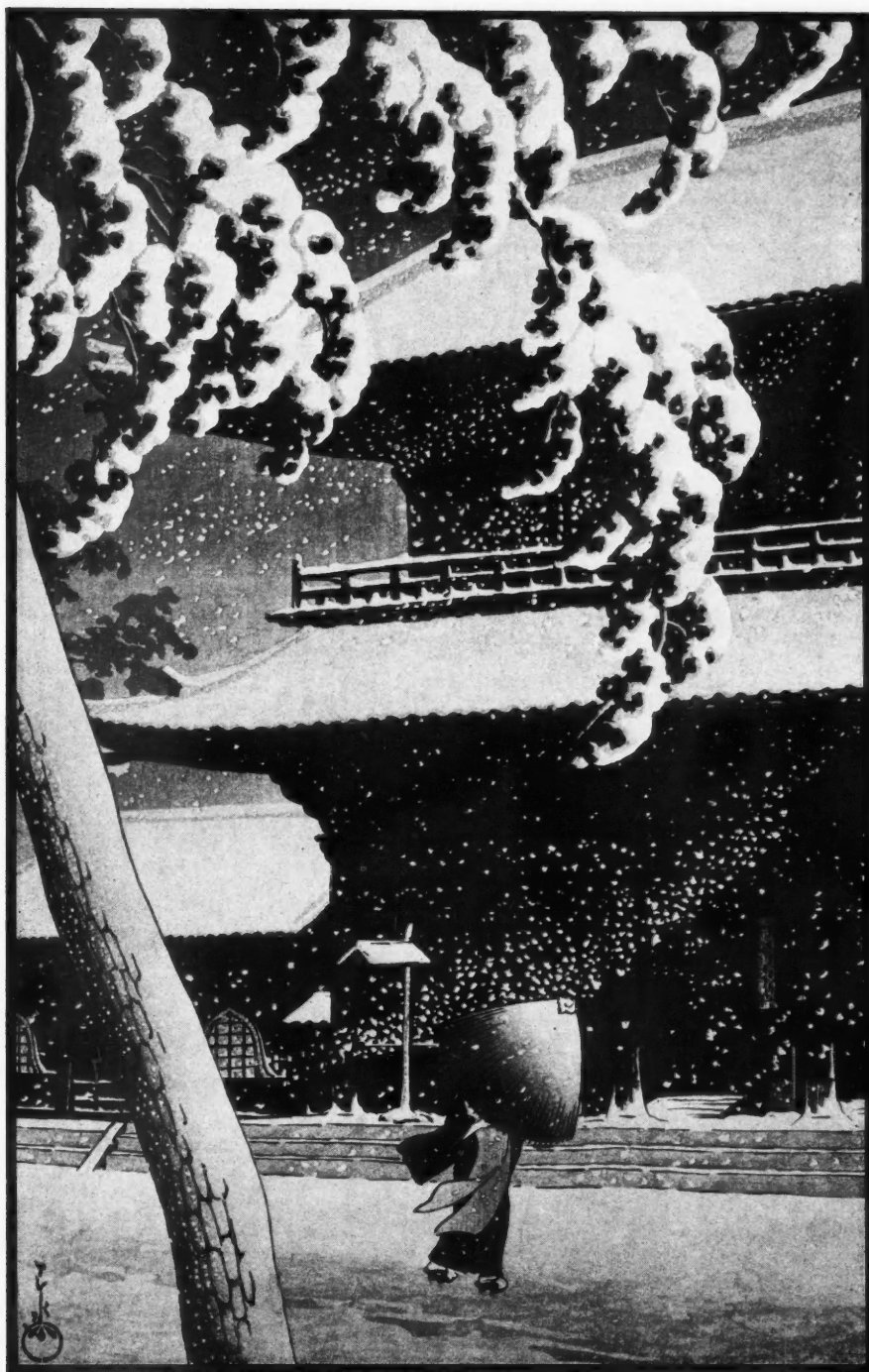


of nature a sort of hieroglyphic and shadowed lesson of the whole world is taught."

As stated by another well known writer upon the arts of the Far East, "The chief difference between the Oriental and Occidental attitude to life and the graphic arts is that Western minds think of this entire planet as a convenient background for that great being called man, while the East merely places humankind where it belongs—a little above the plants and animals, but decidedly below the angels, if any, and after all merely a component part of the cosmos. In other words, man has a place here and fills it fairly well, but his own estimation of it and his importance is slightly exaggerated at times. This philosophical Eastern art im-

plies that all things are equally important upon this terrain, man belongs with the rest of creation, but not very much above it." By this statement of the general principle upon which Japanese art is based, we see that a large part of the intrinsic charm of the Japanese print also is in subordination of the various parts to the whole picture, so that each bit falls into its proper place in the scheme of things, and assumes its own particular niche in relation to all the rest. The print and its subject aims to be a miniature replica of this whirling orb, and to those who read its inner message it succeeds.

This feeling of absolute balance, of perfect apportioning, invades all Japanese arts, notably in the gardens where,



A LANDSCAPE

HASUI

regardless of size, everything is in absolute proportion, in architecture where houses are made part of their environment and subdued to the size of their particular space thus made to fit their background. A "microcosm of this world" is the desideratum.

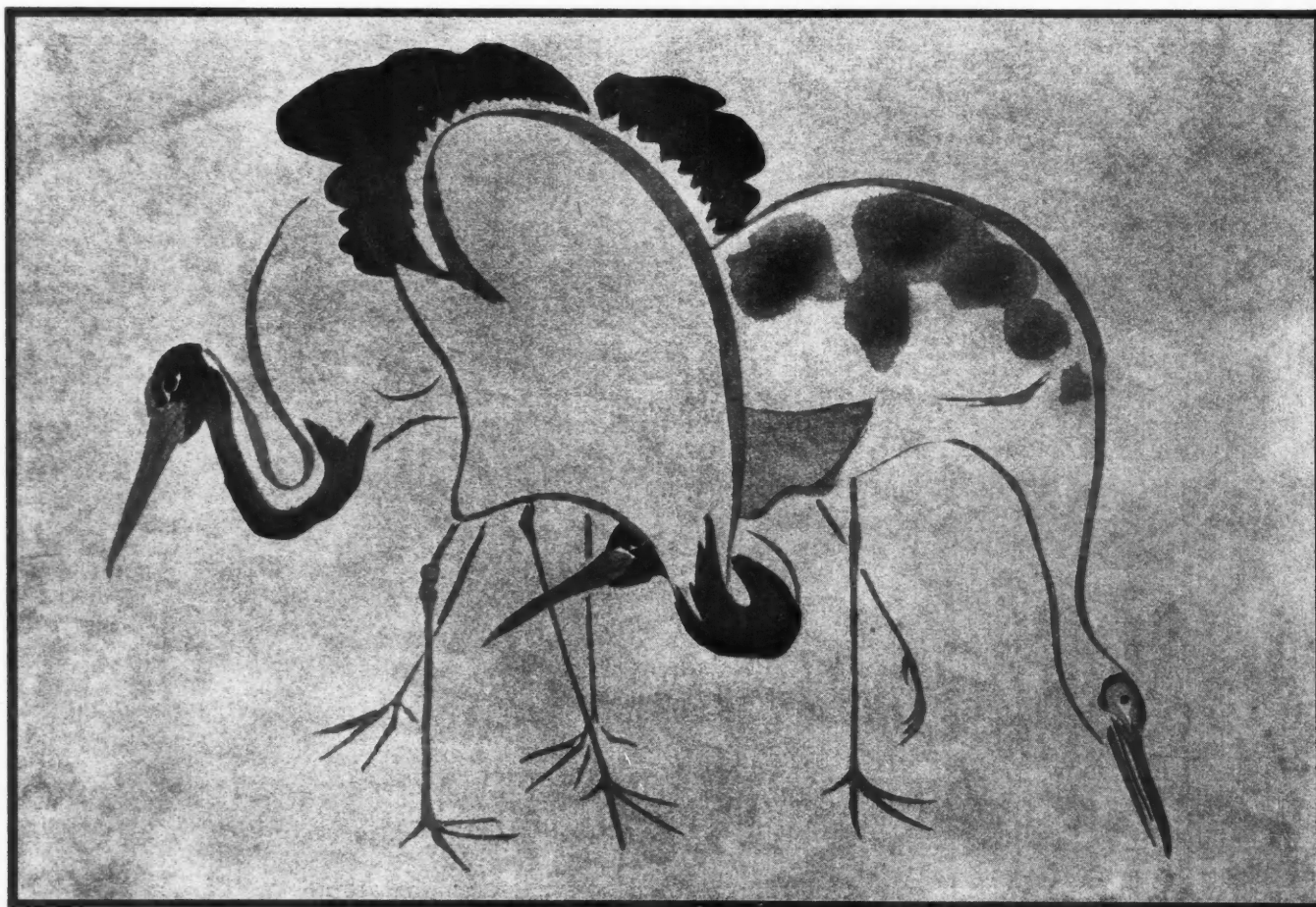
The vital feeling of action and fervor which is part of the Japanese work is accurately transferred from originals to copies in prints, and the very brushwork is duplicated to perfection. The making of these prints is a distinctly animated, rather esoteric art, requiring deep study for the full recognition of its significance.

In their own country, the paintings are mounted most frequently upon long rolls of brocade or other fine fabric,

but some American owners have felt that the involved motifs require a clarifying and emphasizing mounting of contrasting color, or white to give them full opportunity for exhibiting their good points to Western eyes. Occasionally a plain, unpatterned silk or a heavy paper is used as a "mat," and although in their native land the paintings are never encased in glass, this is frequently done here so that their owners and seers may enjoy them continually rather than following the Oriental custom of putting them carefully away for exhibition only upon infrequent occasions. Many of the prints are placed in frames and the very large ones have been developed into screens of great beauty. These sometimes cover one very

large surface or are made up of separate panels for the folding type, and when six or seven of these are arranged in an intricate scene they are matched so perfectly that the picturization appears complete and perfect from every angle and in whichever way the many panels may be disposed. It is a difficult and tedious undertaking to accomplish this effect, but great students of these screens declare that they

A great depth and intensity of character and expression may be seen in every print. Each piece is considered individually, with every color block contributing deftly to the final work. The sense for correct composition and the adept combination of many color units and many forms in a complete design comes to the Japanese worker after little training.



have never found an unmatched one, or one in which this characteristic was not repeated, nor have they discovered a single mistake in the complex arrangement which is necessary to their finish.

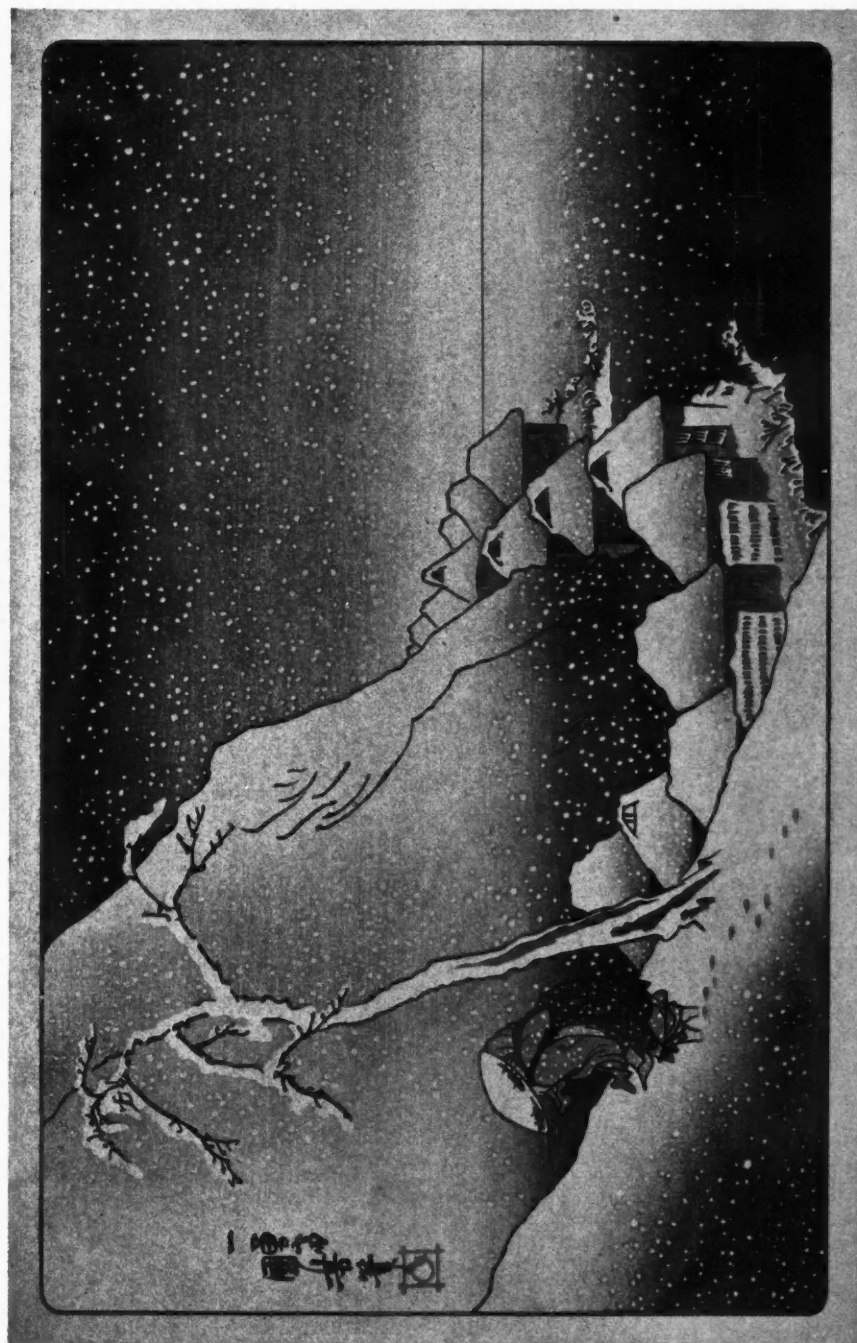
Many of the artists of Japan work in what seems to us a most uncomfortable position, kneeling on the floor, or sitting in their accustomed manner while placing adept brush strokes in their exact places on the piece before them. To us this seems a strenuous and difficult way, but custom has made it simpler for them. It has been said by historical students that the art of Japan was probably derived originally from China, but the technique and the execution has become so varied since that far distant date, thirteen hundred years ago, that there is but little similarity today. Artists of good repute in this land have invariably been held in high esteem. Imperial recognition came to them, rewards were bestowed upon them, and an existence in which they could develop their talent to the highest degree was made possible for them. The very earliest colors used in the Japanese art were black, yellow and red, and with these few pigments extraordinarily elaborate pictures were evolved. Prints copying these early efforts have been carried out with great versimilitude.

CRANES

KORIN
17th Century

**A masterful use of free brush strokes
by Korin who is the founder of
that school of Japanese painting**

The playful and gay little legends which have grown up about the reality and naturalism of the Japanese painters' efforts and their copies in prints is indicated by the story which tells how a picture of a horse placed in a temple was so lively and endowed with so much vigor and lifelike spirit that frequently this equine would spring away from its place and devour the crops of the surrounding countryside. Angry farmers invaded the temple and erased the creature's eyes so that it would not follow these nefarious practices any longer. Another horse from the brush of the same

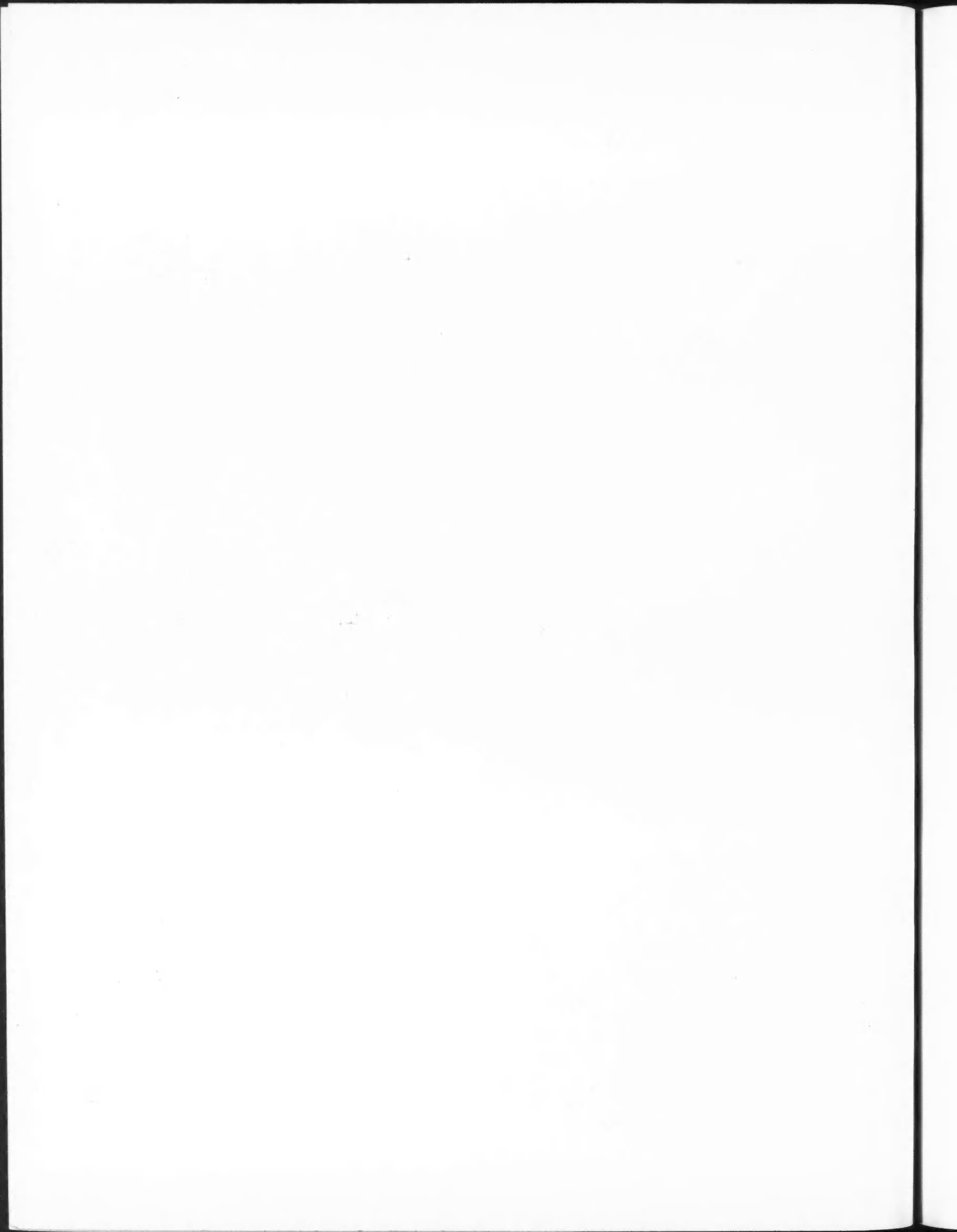


A PRIEST TRAVELING IN THE SNOW

KUNIYOSHI
1797-1861

Copyright, 1931
KERAMIC STUDIO PUB. CO.
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY
1931
Supplement to
DESIGN



painter was acquiring equally bad habits until the artist himself painted a halter into the picture, thus keeping the stray animal tethered to the frame!

Such amusing tales are just an indication of the Japanese appreciation of realism in art at times, and the prints which copy them equally deserve such admiration.

Many of the delicately colored prints give forth an

ruption," in which the nation lived an artificial life, thinking of little but the development of tenuous epics for pageantry and of luxurious and amazing costumes.

The lovely colors used in the prints are deserving of an entire eulogy in themselves, the exquisite cool green tones, the deep reds, the gold and silver adornment, the ivory and blue in stiff folds of garments, or the diaphanous filminess



SUMA BEACH

HIROSHIGE
1797 - 1858

A beautiful composition in tones and values by the great master of Japanese prints

atmosphere of ineffable peace, a sublime repose not equalled in the work of other lands. There is an enveloping sense of a serene unity about their work, which yet comprehends all material things. An intense tenderness and devotion to beauty characterizes these soothing subjects. And in direct contrast to these peaceful muses as shown in pastoral scenes, there are the warlike portrayals of violent military encounters, ferocious warriors, flaming dragons, while yet again we find elaborate court scenes of great grandeur based on a long ago reign of "strange and exquisite cor-

of scarfs and draperies. Rich fullness of tone characterizes all of the prints whether they be simple single subjects, or detailed, crowded religious, social festival scenes. Occasional humorous topics are executed in amusing clarity, with odd, grotesque animals playing parts as ludicrously as humans sometimes do.

There are three distinct schools of style in the prints, as there are in the paintings:

1. Formal, or highly conventionalized.
2. Semi-formal, semi-radical.
3. Entirely free of all restraint in tradition and manner, with dashing lines in modern feeling.

Far more of the first type are to be found, and very few of the last, although the new treatment wins increasing favor with students and also because an impressionistic manner has been common to Japanese art for many centuries, although not expressed in quite the same fashion. A foremost writer says: "Japanese pictures, whether painted or printed, do not supply thought. They only awaken it," and this is a pungent description of their art. One of the greatest contributing causes for their absolute accuracy in depiction is the fact that their writing, cal-

Continued on Page 215



YOUNG COUPLE WITH LOVE LETTER

HARUNOBU
1703 - 1770

TRAVELERS IN THE RAIN

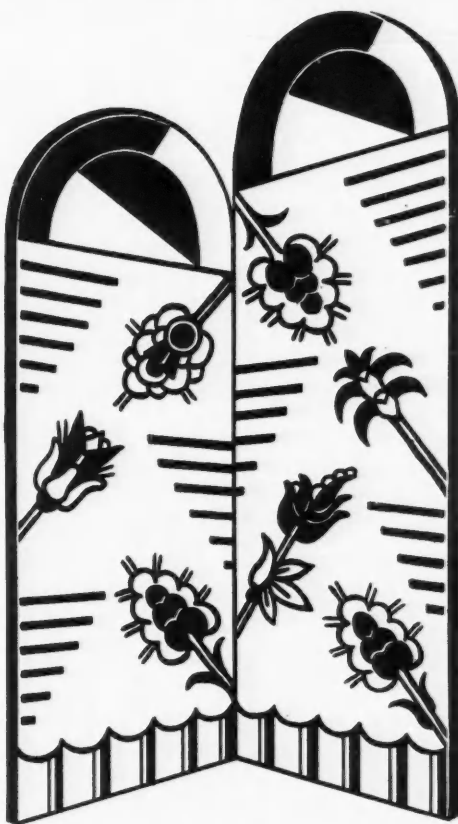
UTAMARO
1754 - 1806

This group is typical of the work of this artist who like so many other Japanese were masters in expressing the rhythmic qualities of rain and other atmospheric effects

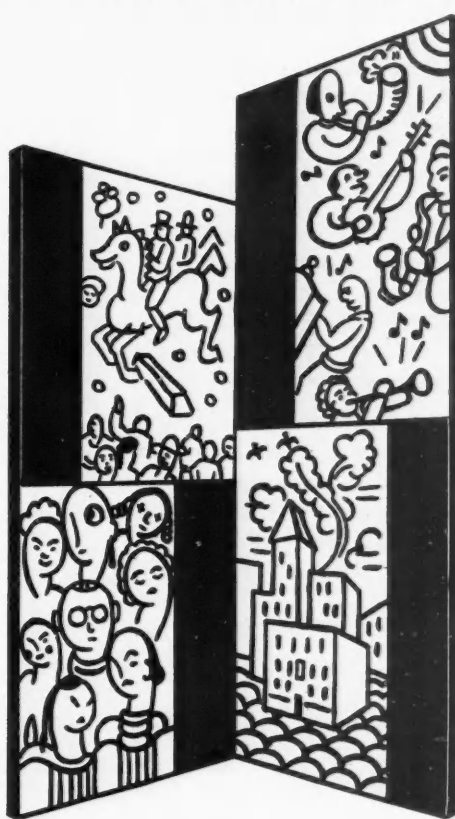
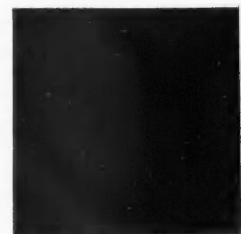
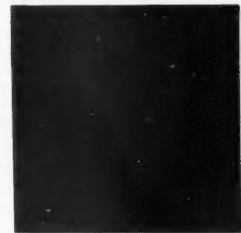
202



DESIGN



SCREENS FROM SKETCHES BY VALLY WIESELTHIER





Eskimo drawing of a hunting scene

THE HUMAN FIGURE IN EARLY ART

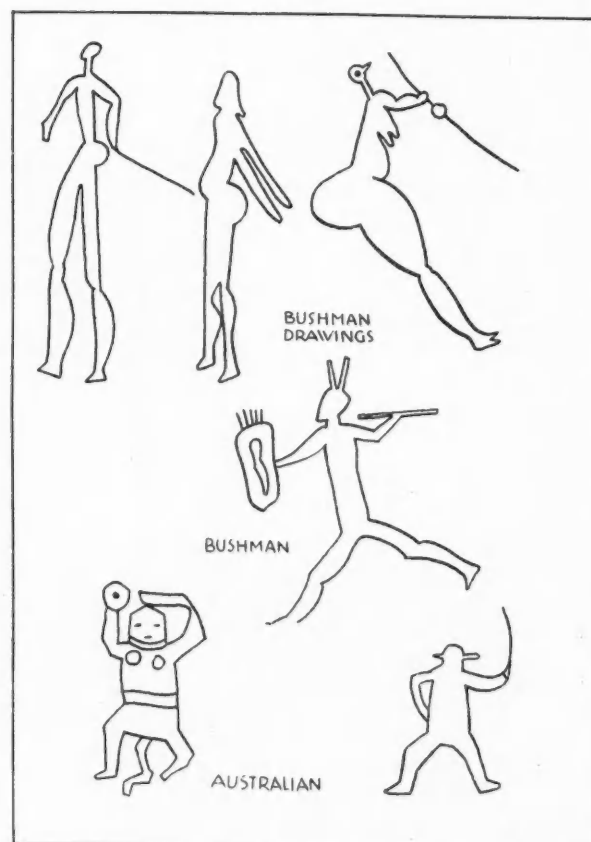
BY ALICE CALLAN

■ The modern desire for a more elemental kind of life has led to an enthusiasm for primitive and archaic things. The universal interest in self causes all people to portray in their art, the human figure; at times for pleasure and at other times for religious purposes. It is of interest to observe in early art how man represented the image of himself. The Pleistocene man was concerned almost wholly with his own life of the moment. Being a hunter, his power of observation was keenly developed. Seeing what appealed to him, he recorded for his own pleasure, his impression in a naive, straight-forward manner. At first he conceived naturalistic forms by means of sculpture in the round; then finding an easier method, he carved less deeply in relief. From relief, drawing and painting were natural steps. Examples of this early sculpture were found in southern Europe. Numerous statuettes of extremely corpulent nude females give the idea that a female deity was worshipped. This seemed to be the prevailing type of feminine beauty. More care was given to the body than to the face. All features were frequently omitted. Feet likewise were at times omitted, due, perhaps, to the fact that they were concealed from the observer by the vegetation. To this period belonged the well known Venus of Willendorf and the bas-relief from Dordogne. Later in this prehistoric time, small figures of carved ivory and bone appeared, which were more slender and more accurately shaped. The head of a young girl came from this age. The artists had evidently become aware of the repellent quality of the corpulent figures and were striving for a more pleasing type of beauty.

In the rock drawings of the Pleistocene Age, figures in motion seemed to have had the most appeal. The artist drew, evidently, not from observation but from memory, and the movement was greatly exaggerated. He was not as concerned with natural proportion as with the essence of motion. All useless detail was excluded. Drawings of hunters found in Spain, done in silhouette as was characteristic, showed an extremely vigorous spirit. In the caves of Spain were also found curious patterns representing the human figure in stylized form. Straight and curved lines symbolized the various parts of the body. These early attempts at portraying the figure showed an art instinct acting with very little knowledge but producing fresh and sincere results.

Although separated by thousands of years, the drawings of the Bushman, the Australian, and the Eskimo have much in common with those of the Pleistocene artist. Like those early hunters of Spain and elsewhere, these later hunting tribes had a keen power of observation and they dis-

This is the first of a series of articles on the human figure in the art of primitive peoples. It is to be followed by others of equal interest covering most significant periods and peoples

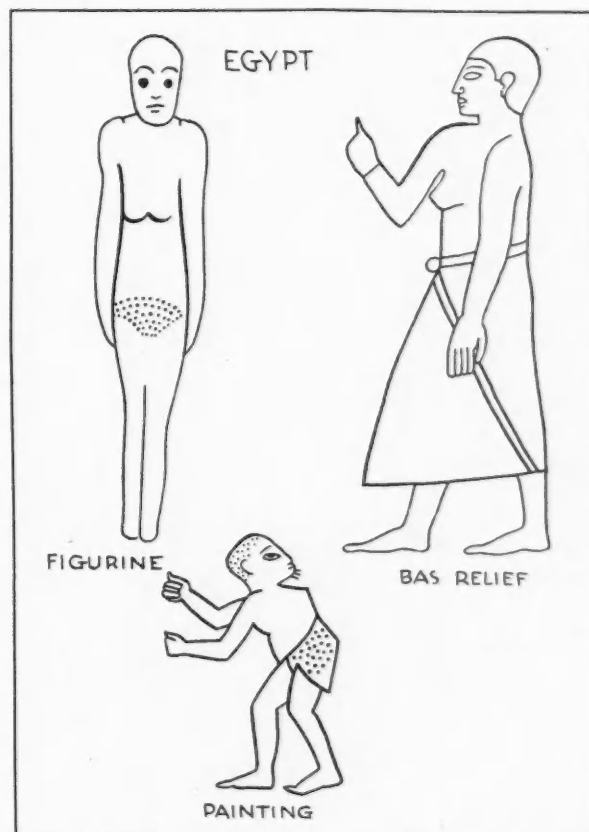
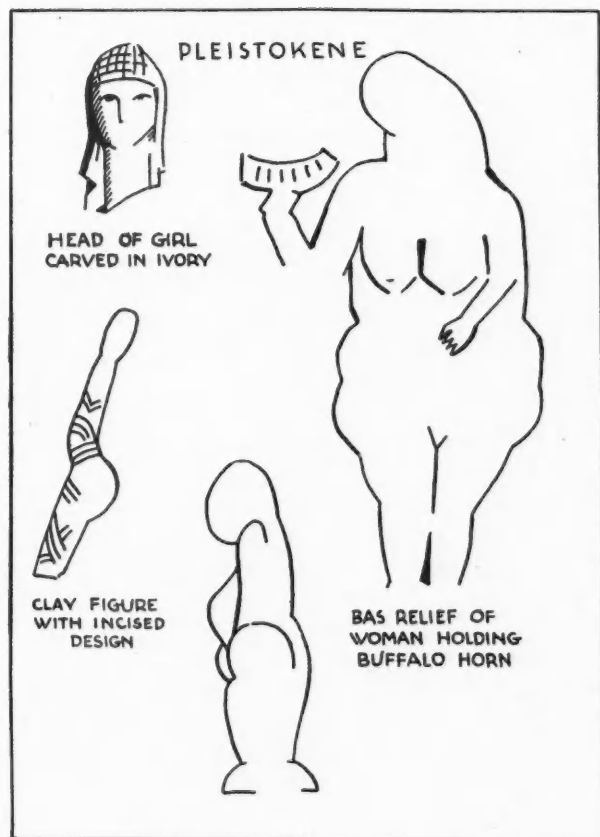
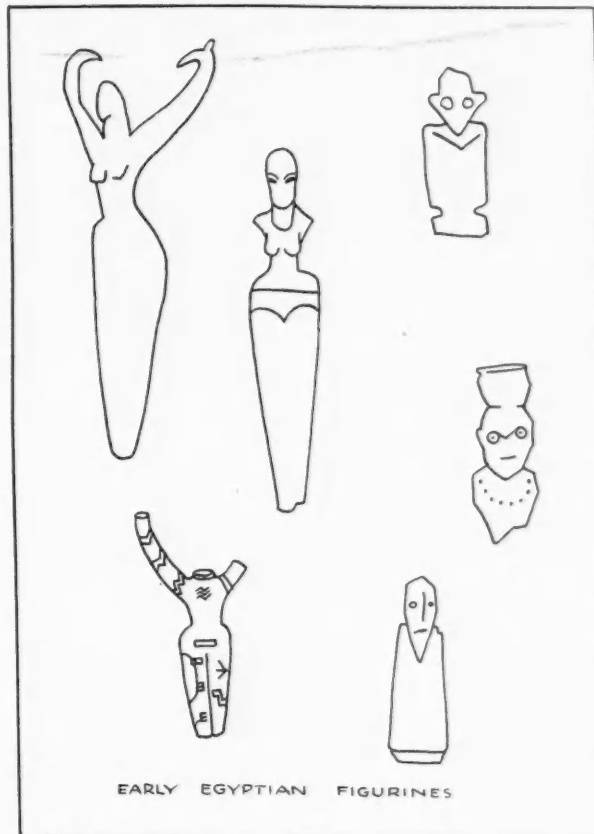


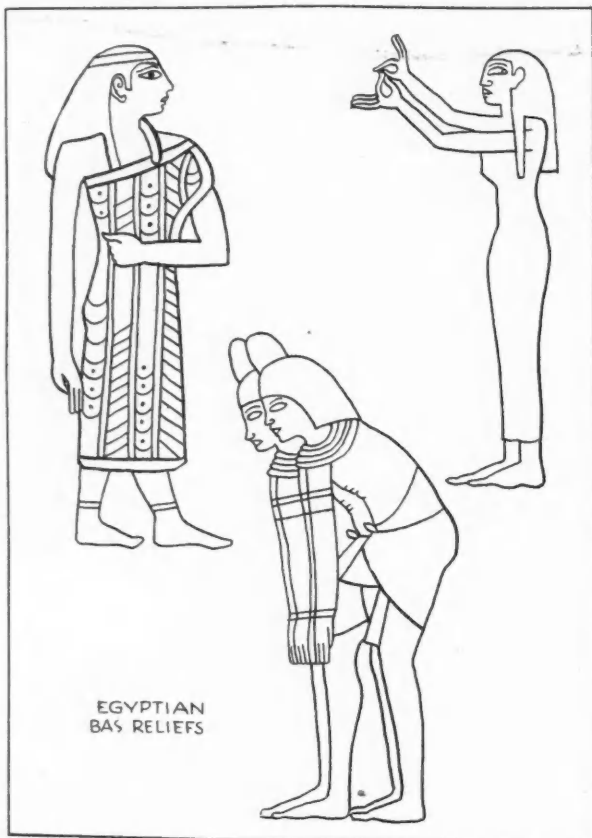
The extreme simplicity of line and form is well expressed in the work of various races shown on these pages

tinguished themselves by making representations true to life. Paintings on rocks, silhouettes on a large scale, were produced, probably from a fondness for recording events of their daily lives. In the Bushman painting, there was the little Bushman himself with his bow, and the Boer with his characteristic big hat and gun. Figures were distorted in the parts that attracted especial attention; hips and calves of the legs being greatly exaggerated. Sometimes they had thread like legs and bodies. One well-known painting showed a fierce battle between the Bushmen and the Kaffirs over a theft of cattle. Like all of these paintings, this set forth spirited action in a most convincing fashion. Unlike the Pleistocene artist, the Bushman occasionally showed a rudimentary knowledge of perspective.

The drawings of the Australian were similar to those of the Bushman in feeling. These people carved on rocks single figures with very little relation to one another. Proportions inclined toward the squat figure used by the African negro; the type with a large head and tiny legs. The drawings of the Eskimo had the same characteristics as those of the Bushman, but were inferior in quality. The Eskimo produced small sculptured figures which the other late hunting tribes did not do. These were crudely carved, bald men of bone, and had some religious significance.

The figure in Egyptian art was evolved around religion. The religion of the Egyptian centered around his desire for a future life. His sculptured figures served two functions; they were companions in the solitude of the grave, and they



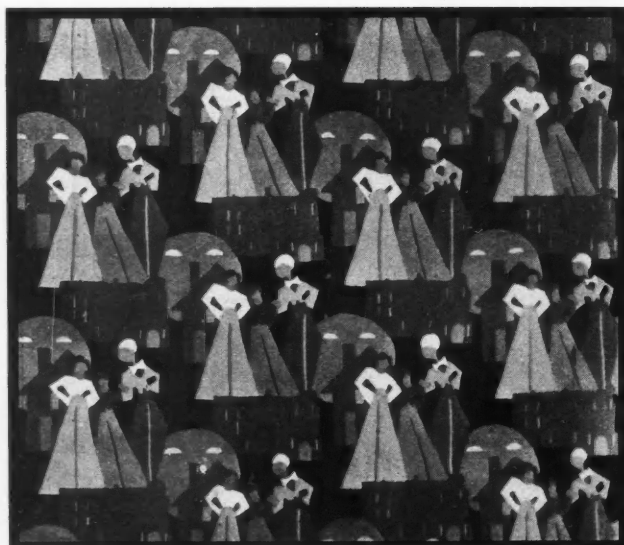


represented the body in the world to come. The ones serving this second purpose were made in the likeness of an individual. Early in this period a conventional method of modeling was developed. This seemed to express the religious idea so satisfactorily that in the whole course of Egyptian art, sculpture adhered to this set of conventions with very little variation. From very early Egyptian times came small pendants or charms, crudely carved in the shape of long pointed human faces with long beards and shaven heads. Small symmetrical female figurines were armless and legless. Articulated figures, jointed in the limbs with

the idea of giving life-like qualities were numerous. Another common type was the funerary statuette which was placed in the tomb. This was a sexless image swathed in a tight mummy dress with hands crossed on the breast.

Sculpture ranged in size from the tiny figurines to colossal statues. The typical male figure of the ruling class was modeled rigidly erect, one foot in advance of the other, arms close to the side, or crossed on the breast. The seated figure was likewise symmetrical with knees together and hands either on the knees or folded. He was low browed with long hair, heavy lips and fixed eyes, and wore ornamented clothing and jewelry. Individuality was subordinated to a standardized idea of nobility. The heavy, symmetrical masses of which these figures were composed gave a sense of calm superiority. There was a blending of convention and close observation of natural form. Sculpture in the round showed none of the distortion of the reliefs. A highly conventionalized method of drawing the figure had a powerful grip on the Egyptian. He overcame the difficulty of representing a three dimensional object on a two dimensional surface by putting together essential parts regardless of whether they were visible on a single view or not. These drawings showed a front view of the body with exaggerated shoulder width, feet and head in profile with a front view of the eye, and arms in impossible positions. Both body and clothing were considered essential and many times both were drawn as if the clothing were transparent. The Egyptian simplified the forms of nature and set down a summary in an abbreviated fashion; the artist of Mesopotamia told the same story with more detail.

The chief source of inspiration for textiles as shown on these two pages as well as other forms of design is to be found in the imagination



"Stags" at eve



Cocks and Clowns

DESIGN

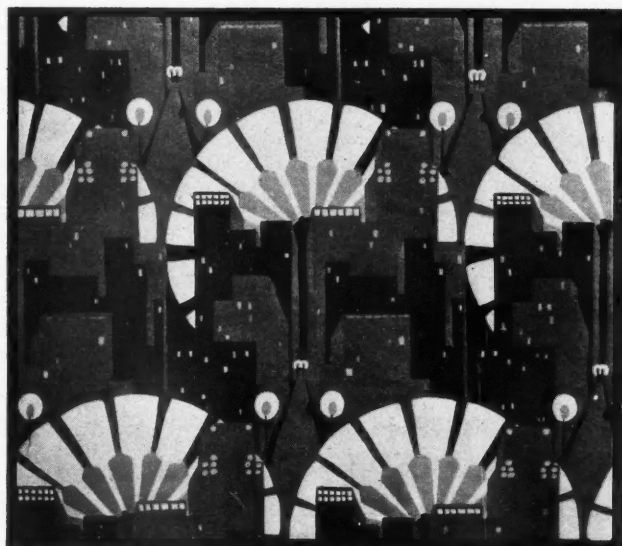
TEXTILE DESIGN

BY ROSEMARY KETCHAM

These six textile designs by pupils of Miss Ketcham at the University of Kansas express the rhythmic beauties to be found in modern subjects

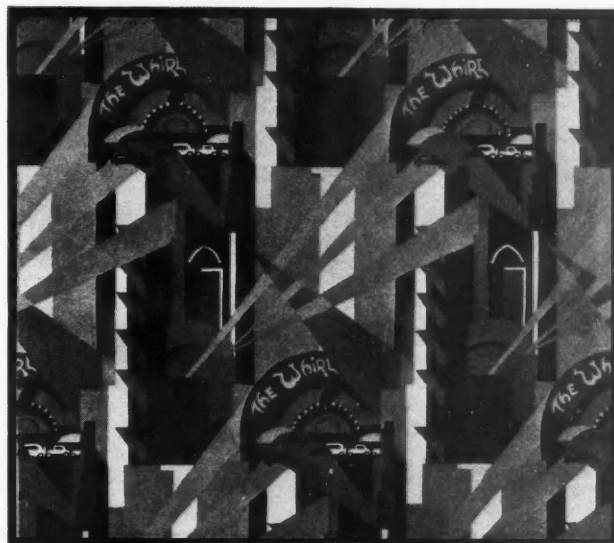
■ The approach to textile designing is begun in the Freshman year when stress is laid upon principles of color, composition, and repeated pattern, rather than upon the requirements of the machine for purposes of reproduction. The latter idea is emphasized during the following years, when textile designing is taken up seriously. In considering the demands of the machine for the making of a textile, effort is made constantly to preserve the art element in design. Much is made of color. When motifs are chosen from nature forms they are used abstractly rather than realistically. Occasionally use is made of the historic idea, and much suggestion is given through the study of primitive art. However, the chief source of inspiration for textiles, as well as other forms of design, is found in the imagination. For example, a definite size is chosen for the repeat of a pattern. This space is divided by lines for the sake of good composition. The resulting space divisions or the lines themselves are clothed with forms which may or may not suggest nature, but which are based upon imagination. In this way each student is given free play to express his own individuality. Care is taken not to allow the idea of novelty for the sake of novelty to take the place of the serious consideration of color and composition. With freedom for personal expression, together with a sane background of thorough study and an effort for technical accuracy, a type of design results which both conforms to the requirements of the machine and at the same time shows spontaneity of expression.

Continued on Page 215

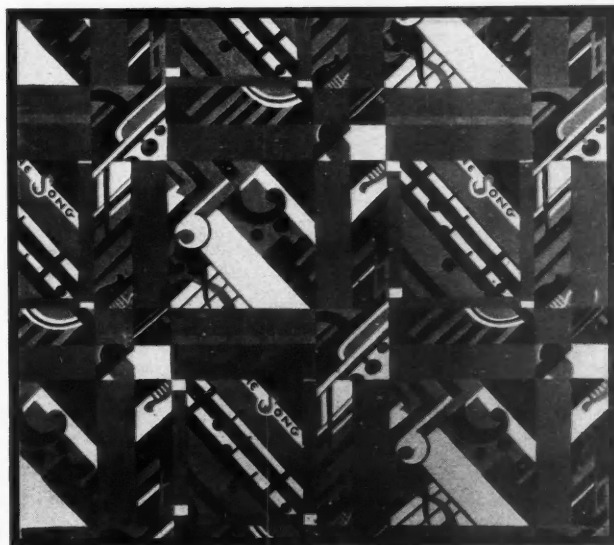


Big city night

FOR FEBRUARY



Motors

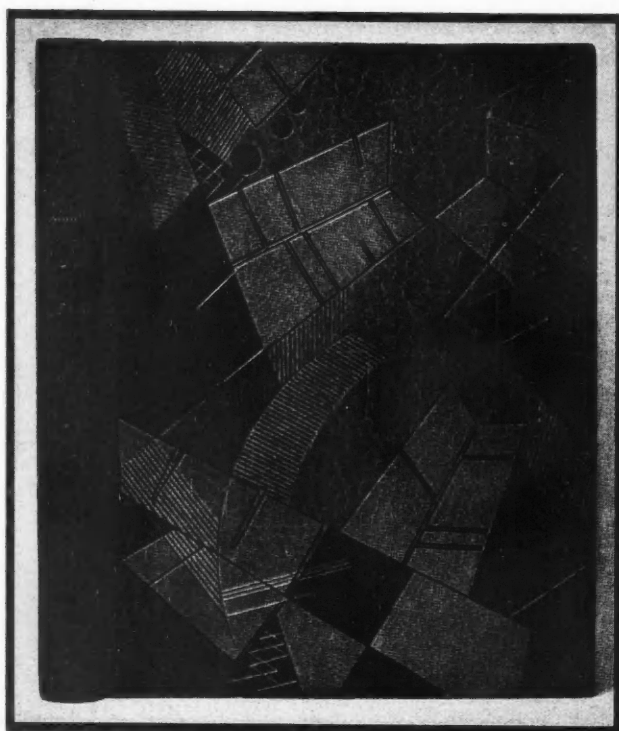
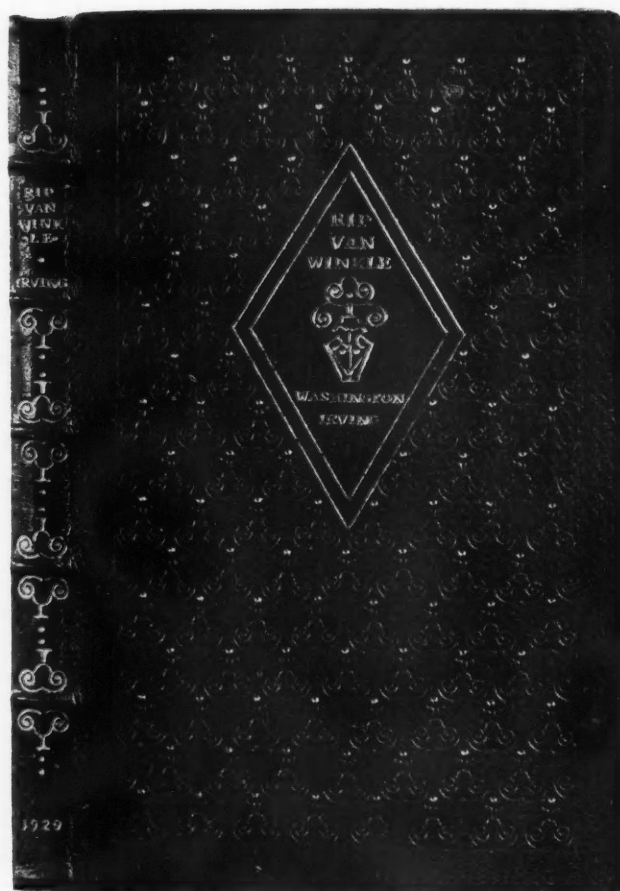
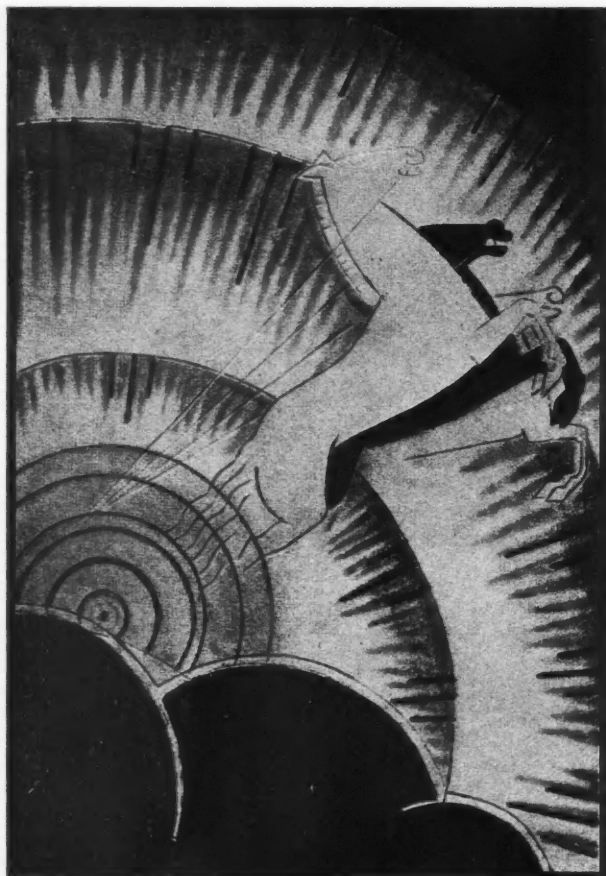


Music



Traffic lights

207



father's cast off galligaskins, which he had a much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather. Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals of foolish, well oiled disposition, who take the world easy, eat a white bread or brown whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a

penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have a habituated life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of

Above — Cover and double page of Rip Van Winkle by a pupil in book-binding at the University of Kansas

Right — Modern French book covers done in leather with an extremely dynamic effect obtained by inlaid leather

BOOKBINDING

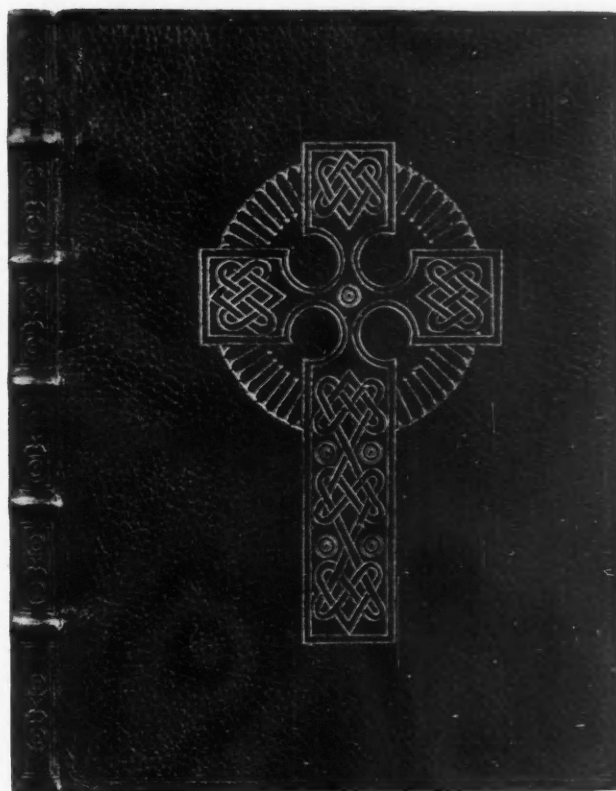
BY ROSEMARY KETCHAM

■ Bookbinding is offered during the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years at University of Kansas. This is taken up in a serious manner based upon the English method of Cobden-Sanderson. During the Sophomore year stress is laid upon the process of "forwarding", and for the most part the books are tape sewn. These books are ordinarily covered with linen to which is added a half leather binding in the latter part of the year. During the Junior and Senior years, the books are sewn with "raised bands" and the binding is done in Levant morocco or seal skin. Effort is made to obtain leather that is "acid free". This is most important as leathers which contain acid will soon rot and break. Tooling is taken up simply in the Sophomore year where titles are put upon leather labels in "blind tooling". During the Junior and Senior years gold tooling is done, together with leather "inlay".

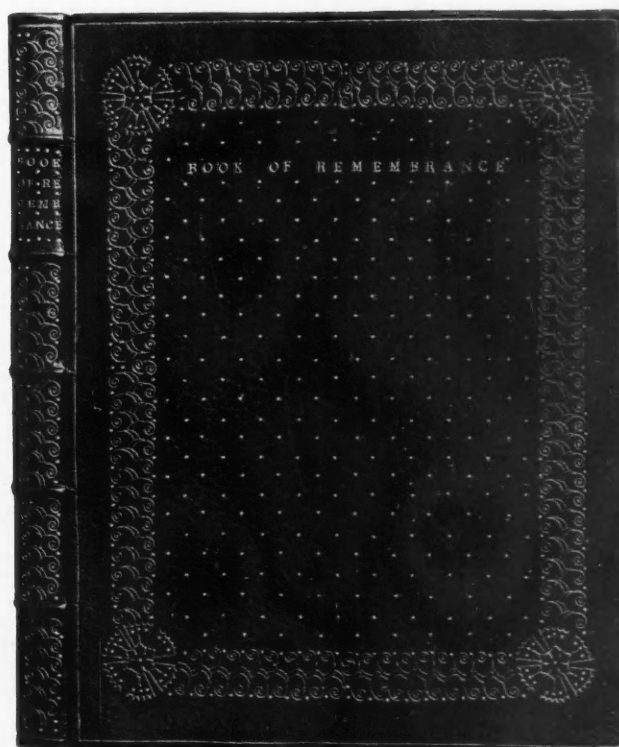
There is probably no craft which is more conducive to the control of the hand than bookbinding, where absolute accuracy is imperative. Moreover there is an increasing demand in America for hand-bound books and many high schools are taking up seriously the study of bookbinding. This craft offers much inducement to the study of design for the above reasons and also because one can combine with it lettering, the designing of title pages and even a certain amount of metal work, as displayed in copper and silver clasps. The two books shown here are not only bound by the students in question but their contents were entirely hand-lettered.

The two books illustrated on this page and the Rip Van Winkle on the opposite page are the work of Miss Ketcham's pupils at University of Kansas and show a beautiful restraint in their design. The books were designed and executed throughout by students in the design course at the University of Kansas

FOR FEBRUARY



An example of fine placing in the use of the Celtic Cross nicely tooled on this cover ■ ■ ■ ■



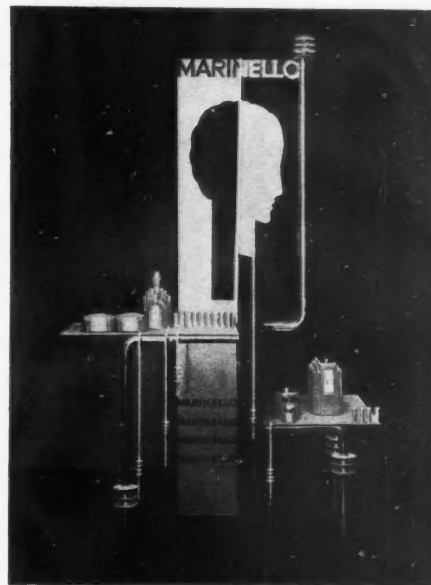
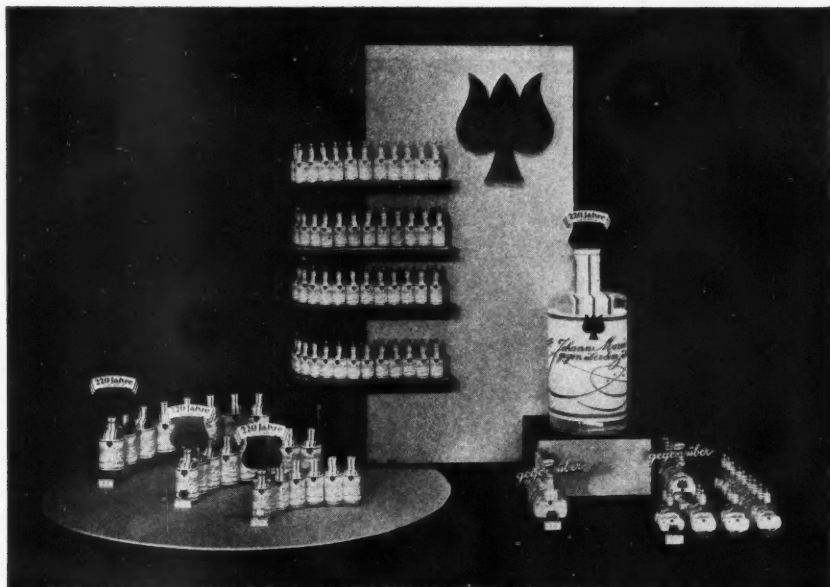


NEW TEXTILES FOR NEW INTERIORS



■ Aside from the interest attached to the fresh personal interpretation of the contemporary spirit which the exhibition displays, it is extremely important in that it affords the American public their first opportunity of appreciating the point of view which animates Schule Reimann—a modern German Industrial Art School. The Reimann, although it differs from other celebrated German Industrial Art Schools, in that it is a private enterprise and as such is not subsidized by state or city, nevertheless follows the same forward looking policy that has made the German Kunstgewerbe School a significant cultural and economic force. In its combined school, laboratory and work shop students learn from teachers who are leaders in their chosen profession, not only the technique and theory of the arts of design, but a definite philosophy of life as well. They are taught to rationalize the modern spirit and apply it to the life about them, to sense the aesthetic of the machine age and express it through its logical medium—the machine. The close connection maintained between industry and the Kunstgewerbe Schulen is largely responsible for the high standard of design to be found in German manufactured products.

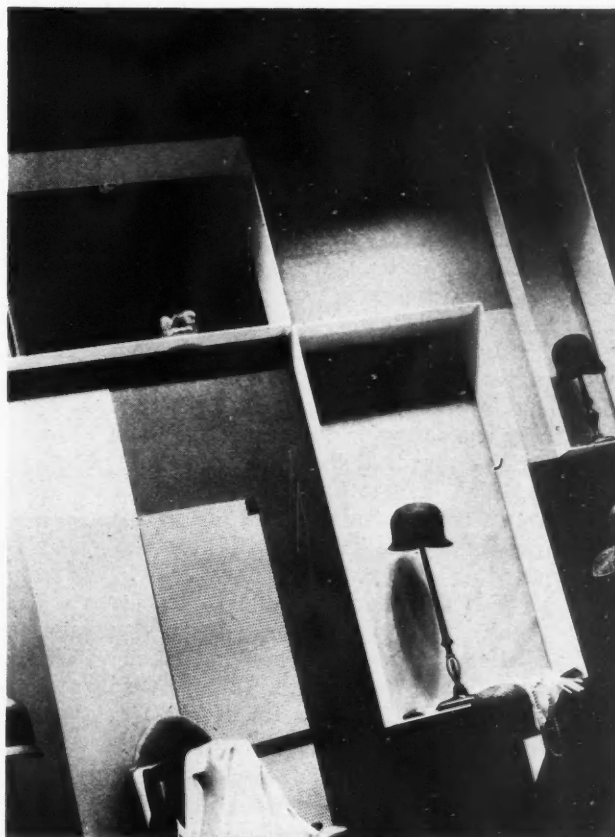
Reimann School designs follow no stereotyped, stylized

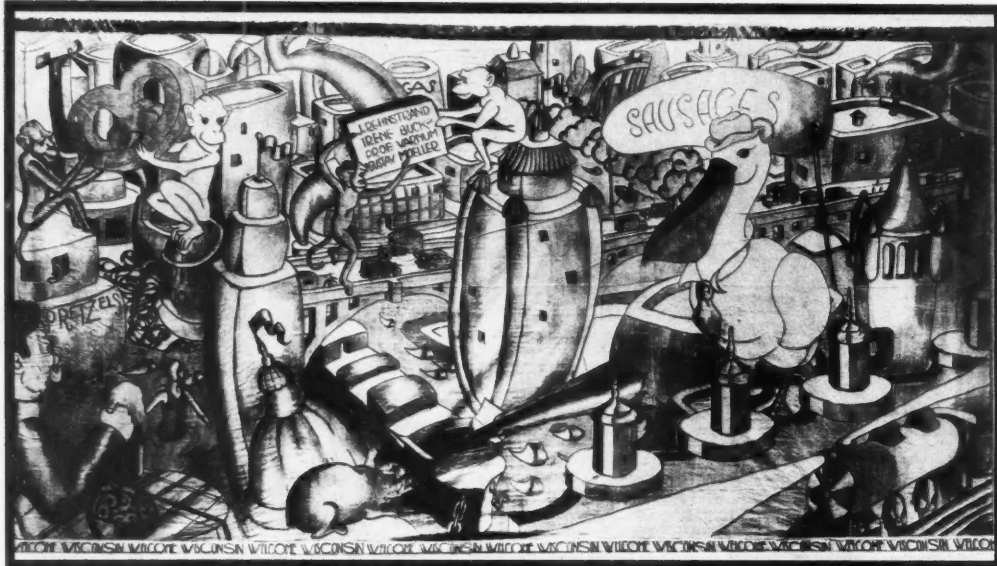


Modern textiles and displays from the Reimann School illustrated on this and opposite page reproduced by courtesy of Art Alliance of America

WINDOW DISPLAYS IN THE MODERN MANNER

formulas of what has come to be popularly and often erroneously considered the modern style. Their essential modernity results from a pedagogical policy which instructs its pupils to go to life about them for their ideas. Copying and adapting period motives is not permissible. Important factors in the high standard of Reimann School work are the school workshops where pupils, working as apprentices to their teacher designers, learn the practical application of their designs and execute commissions for industry. Important contacts with the industrial world are therefore made before the student graduates as full fledged designer. The output of the Reimann School workshops is by no means solely confined to students' work. The teacher designers, as for example, Maria May, one of the foremost textile designers in Europe today, use the shops for executing commissions. "Executed by the Reimann School Workshops," has come to be synonymous with a chic, personal interpretation of the modern spirit and will be found attached to many of the arresting window displays, stage settings, and costumes for reviews. It is significant that enrollment in the Reimann School is by no means confined to Germans, a large percentage of students coming from France, Austria and even from the United States.





MILWAUKEE

By Gordon Schlichting in green is an intriguing and entertaining composition of spiral forms

WALL HANGINGS IN THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

BY ELLA WITTER

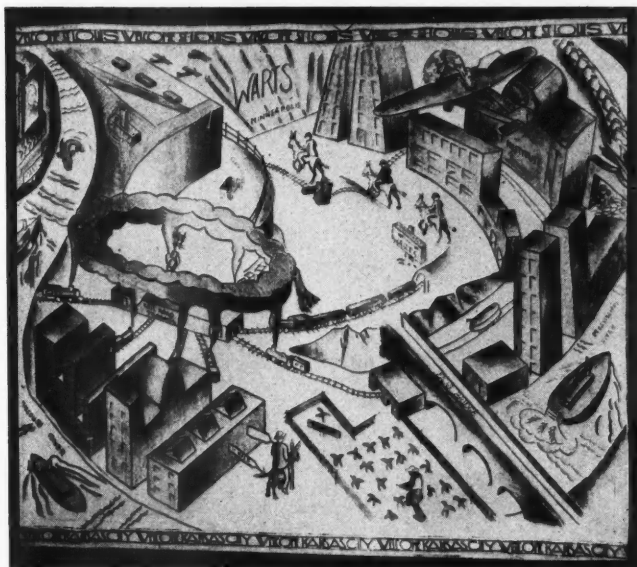
■ The room in which four hundred and fifty guests were to banquet May, 1930, was to be decorated. That old problem of taking care of a huge space with but a limited purse—what art teacher has not been confronted with it? The guests were to be artists. These decorations, surely, should reflect the modern art spirit. There would be the banquet and then the ball. They could also serve as an entertainment feature. So then, we must plan to have something large, spirited, and with plenty of detail. What could be better than murals?

With the idea of mural hangings in mind, we found our wall spaces between engaged columns varying in width from six to twenty-two feet, each of these spaces being broken by one or two windows nine feet high. We decided to cover the entire wall, including windows, to make murals nine feet high, and to hang them from the curtain rods. Because we could have the hotel dining room only a few hours previous to the banquet, these hangings should be so constructed as to be put into place quickly. They must be transportable and they must not be too heavy. To meet these requirements muslin was chosen. By using charcoal and pastel crayon or chalk instead of paint, we could have our murals lighter in weight and they could be rolled without cracking. By the addition of hems at the top and bottom, with wooden rods slipped through, they would hang flat.

The murals, as well as the stage show which followed the banquet, were to feature some of the important cities

Striking and amusing murals made by pupils in the Minneapolis high schools for the Western Arts Convention under the direction of Miss Witter who has spent some time studying with Herr Hoffman of Munich. This new note in design has been of great interest to those who teach art

represented in the Association. The daring theme of the evening, "Warts Enroute", grew out of the amusing crowding together of "W" and "Arts" in a poorly spaced "Welcome Warts" sign observed at a previous convention. Now with our general effect and theme planned, the designing of these hangings became a major art problem in Central and North High Schools. Atlases, geographies, city maps and guides were brought into the art room. Uncles and aunts were interviewed. All this was done with the idea of finding the characteristics peculiar to each city. Not the photographic aspects, but humorous, entertaining, and differentiated features were used, so that Chicago had its



KANSAS AND ST. LOUIS

By Earl Benson is designed in orange with an exciting and humorous arrangement of ovals and radiating lines

stock yards and its bandits; Oklahoma, its oil and its Indians; Denver its gold and its mountains, and Milwaukee its beer and its Pelican. (A. G. Pelikan-Director, Art Institute). The drawings chosen (they had been made to scale ten inches high)—now, how were we to enlarge such huge creations? Chicago, for instance, was to be nine feet high and over twenty-one feet long. Our idea was to enlarge portion after portion by the uses of a reflectoscope lantern. Very fortunately, however, the General Outdoor Advertising Company kindly allowed us the use of their facilities. The young artists from Central and North met at this studio and were able, by concerted effort, to enlarge a few drawings each Saturday afternoon. The muslin was pinned on the wall, and the drawing reflected thereon. The students, walking on an elevated platform, and two working from below, were thus able to trace the reflected design with charcoal. This meeting of the students on Saturday, as well as their visiting of each other's schools, brought unity into the project.

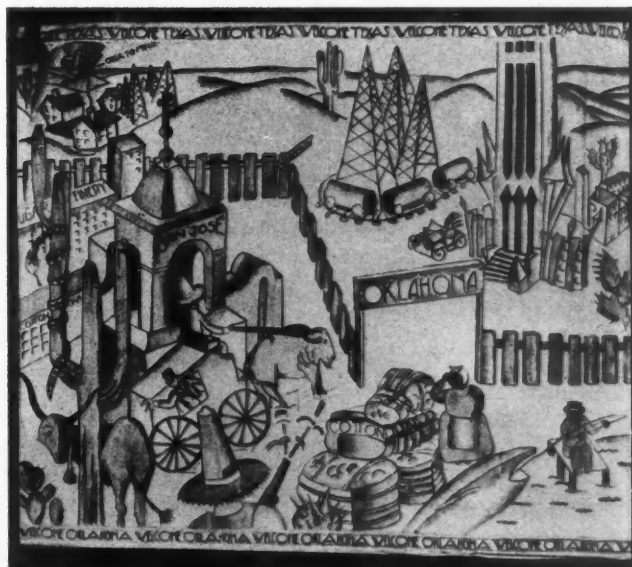
The enlarged hangings, returned to school, now became a group project. Their size necessitated their being hung, one each, in four different rooms. Each artist became a director with assistants working from tops of step-ladders, tables and chairs, or seated on the floor, as the work demanded. The mechanical difficulties—rapid tracing of

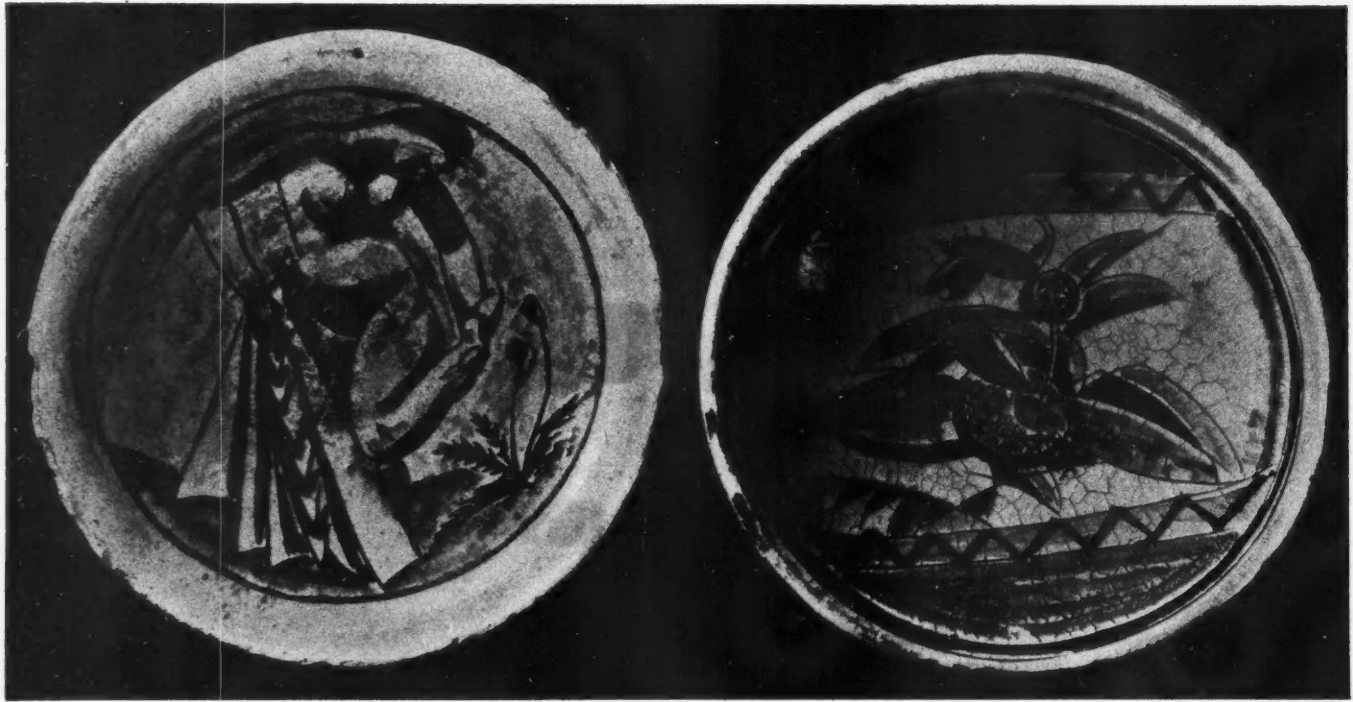
unfamiliar designs, crowded class rooms, short periods, many different hands—may have weakened the drawings, but never lessened the interest of the workers. No idling and no talking in rooms far removed from the teacher control were evidence of absorption in the problem. In all, over twelve hundred feet of wall space were covered with more or less successful three dimensional drawing. The murals were held together by similar treatment. Being toned with charcoal and one color each, they made a pleasing, unified wall. Chicago, in black, white and red, was followed by Detroit in red orange; St. Louis and Kansas City in orange. The colors of the spectrum followed about the room ending with red purple, assigned to Denver. Each mural was bordered, top and bottom, with a running line of lettering—"Welcome Chicago" or "Welcome Milwaukee", etc.

The guests pronounced the murals not only a successful decoration in that they preserved a wall flatness, but found their closer study highly entertaining. Between dances, prizes were given for the speediest and most accurate finding of certain portions as pictured on a sheet of details. The whole project, from the designing to the hanging of the completed murals in the hotel, was an important piece of business, a big accomplishment, to the students concerned, and so functioned educationally.

TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA

By Evelyn Johnson is in blue green arranged and designed to lead the eye on through many zigzags





Courtesy Montross Gallery

MODERN POTTERY

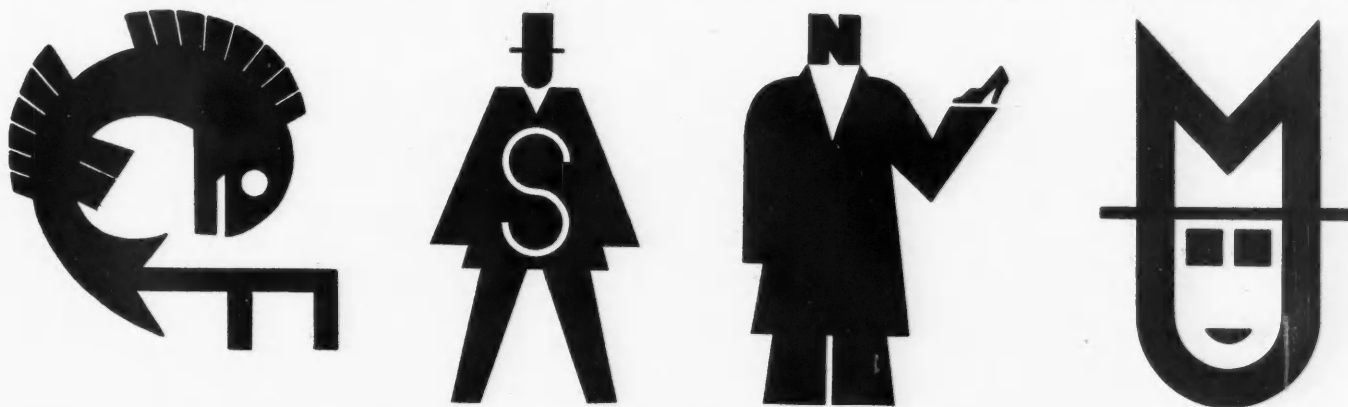
BY H. VARNUM POOR



Courtesy Montross Gallery

■ The forms and simplifications of modern painting are largely drawn from the forms and simplifications arrived at in other less suave materials than paint and canvas. The sharp color divisions of mosaics, the severe simplifications of early wood and stone carvings, have greatly influenced modern painters. Distortions, so disconcerting in an easel picture, have a sense of rightness when arrived at through the demands of proper space filling in decorative art. I believe that the natural development of modern art lies in a closer application of things more related to everyday usage. In this direction the artist escapes the devitalizing isolation of the studio and finds in the appropriate materials those inherent limitations and demands which give a sense of necessity and fitness to the completed form.

Making clay into decorated pottery completes a cycle, a beginning and end, form and enrichment controlled by the artist. The method of the pottery shown in this exhibition, known as Under-glaze Decoration, is very simple. It allows the same subordination of technique that is shown in modern painting, and for the same reason; to keep clear the essential point of view which is judgment of relations in color and form. Under-glaze Decoration, on a white clay slip over a coarse pottery body, is the method of the old Persians, simple technically, yet bothersome and requiring a skill in manipulation which has made it long discarded in modern factory practice. The white slip is applied over the ware and fired. The decoration is then carried out on this ground in various metallic oxides which develop their color only when fused with the clear over-glaze. The work must be sure and swift as it cannot be changed on the porous ground. The piece is completed in a second firing. The intense white heat at which this is carried out, while restricting the range of colors, imparts the depth and rich brilliance characteristic of this ceramic method.



Trademarks by the pupils of Schule Reimann reproduced here through courtesy of the Art Alliance of America

TEXTILE DESIGNS

Continued from Page 207

During the Freshman year, definite problems are assigned to the entire class to be completed within a limited period. Later on more and more liberty is given to the student for choice of motif and type of pattern. For example, a class is told that a certain time will be allotted to textile designing, also that a choice may be made by each student as to whether the design shall be for printed silk or printed cotton. In most cases the motif is optional. Occasionally contours are given with a stipulation that a definite type of design—such as dress silk, cotton or drapery material—shall be completed within a limited period. This stimulates speed of execution and prepares the student for practical work in connection with business later on. The illustrative type of textile finds much favor with the majority of students. Many times college motifs are used as a basis for design. At other times the whirl of modern life suggests a decorative treatment. Forms of amusement as well as present day modes of living come in for their share in the making of textile designs.

The attempt is made to correlate all the subjects taken during the course of four years' study. There are classes in nature drawing which afford a background for nature treatment in textiles and other types of design expression. There are special classes in other forms of drawing and composition as well as those in the treatment of designs for the purposes of advertising. In the design classes patterns are worked out which are applied in the handicraft classes through processes of batik, leather tooling, jewelry, and other forms of hand work.

JAPANESE PRINTS

Continued from Page 201

ligraphy, necessitates the knowledge of how to place strokes upon a surface without the slightest deviation, at peril of having one's message misunderstood. Consequently every Japanese who can write is possessed of ability with the brush.

From the very early seventeenth century colored wood

block printing has been used in Japan for the making of illustrated books and single copies of paintings. Black and white wood block printing originated at an even earlier date. It must not be thought that the mention some time back of the similarity of lithography and wood block engraving implied the lack of Japanese use of lithography. On the contrary they have been producing chromo-lithographed work for some time.

Wood block printing has, of course, been used in other civilized countries for a long period, also, but the Japanese technique is dissimilar from these methods. A direct description of the process follows: The blocks are made from cherry-wood, called "sakura," because of its unusual even hard grain. The work is done parallel to this grain. The design drawn by the artist with a brush on thin paper is pasted face downward on the block. The engraver then cuts the outlines into the block with a knife, subsequently removing all superfluous wood with chisel and gouge. High degree of skill is needed for this work, which gives the finest facsimile reproduction of drawings possible without the use of photography. The gradual rounding off of surfaces makes possible the blending of colors without hardness of outline. When the print is to be made in colors a separate block is made for each tint, with one for the general outlines, and several others for the graduating tints. Rice paste is the medium for mixing the colors, and the printer is the artist-artisan to whom goes a large amount of praise for accuracy and color sense, since it is his entire responsibility to regulate amounts and depths of tone in every print, being guided by a mere dot at each corner defining the limits of the space to be covered.

Color printing of this sort has been used in China and Korea, but with no such great success as in Japan. For a time there was a decline in the art, being caused by the use of too many colors, and by careless work in producing quantities of copies. In the first days of its invention a tint of red was used with black. From this beginning grew the vari-colored art which makes possible such complete chromatic symphonies today. The famous artist, Hokusai, was among the best known makers of designs for prints, although there were many workers before his time whose color prints of beautiful women were collected in other



Large decorative figures used as murals made by students of Boys Technical High School of Milwaukee under direction of Alfred G. Pelikan

This amusing clown with exaggerated arms was designed by a stage design pupil of Virginia Murphy of Erasmus Hall High School of Brooklyn

DECORATIVE FIGURES

nations. Historical and dramatic scenes, geishas, temples, birds, flowers, landscapes, mountains, all have contributed their beauties to this medium. Collections of designs for kimonos (garments) were also printed in the early days, and continue to be produced in fine colors. For the illustration of early books this work was unsurpassed, and supplements to magazines of the finer type appear today, although many of these are lithographed.

The distinctively Japanese art of color printing reaches its highest fulfillment in reproductions of great paintings of native scenes. It serves as a decorative, lovely and educational medium for the edification of the people of that land and of many others. Increasing numbers of fine prints come to America, and ever growing numbers of people here are learning to appreciate them and to understand the sometimes seemingly intricate and complicated expositions of colorful scenes to which this art lends itself so well.

